

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 4, 6-13 and 15-17 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 13, 15 and 16 are amended, claim 17 is added and claims 2 and 5 are canceled. Claim 16 is amended to add a period. Support for amended claims 1 and 13 may be found in the original specification at, for example, page 17, lines 2-17 and FIG. 4C. No new matter is added.

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-3, 5, 9, 13 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,134,014 ("Zaima") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,007,890 ("DeBlander").

Claims 10-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Zaima in view of DeBlander, further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,186,270 ("Roller").

Claims 4, 6-8 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Zaima in view of DeBlander, further in view of JP 11-161282 ("JP 282").

Applicant respectfully traverses each of the above rejections.

None of the applied references teach or suggest a sound-absorbing structure, including a substantially flat support base, a substantially flat sound-absorbing material arranged substantially parallel to the support base, and a corrugated partition plate interposed between the support base and the sound-absorbing material, the corrugated partition plate having upper antinode portions opposed to the sound-absorbing material and lower antinode portions opposed to the support base, wherein at least one, but not all, of the lower antinode portions is supported by and in contact with an elastic element by low-vibration portions of the support base, while the remaining lower antinode portions of the corrugated partition plate are at least

partially separated from the support base by an air gap (Δ), as recited in claim 1 and similarly recited in claim 13.

The Patent Office alleges that Zaima discloses lower antinode portions supported by an elastic element. However, claim 1, as amended, requires the elastic element to also be in contact with at least one of the lower antinode portions. In contrast, Zaima discloses that a lower surface of each arch (alleged lower antinode portions) is connected to a foam layer 18 (alleged elastic element) by a heat activated adhesive 20. That is, the lower surface of the arches (alleged lower antinode portions) are in contact with the heat activated adhesive 20 and not the foam layer 18 (alleged elastic element). Thus, nowhere does Zaima teach or suggest wherein at least one of the lower antinode portions is supported by, and in contact with, an elastic element by low-vibration portions of the support base, as required in claim 1, and similarly required in claim 13.

Further, the Patent Office alleges that DeBlander discloses that lower portions of recesses are at least partially separated from a support base by an air gap, that Roller allegedly discloses a corrugated partition plate that includes wave patterns with different frequencies and different amplitudes, and that JP 282 allegedly discloses at least one second partition plate configured to partition air spaces. However, even if each of DeBlander, Roller and JP 282 are relied on as allegedly disclosing these features, none of DeBlander, Roller and JP 282 remedy the deficiencies of Zaima in disclosing or rendering obvious the features of claims 1 and 13.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claims 1 and 13, and dependent claims thereof, are patentable over the applied references. Thus, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) are respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1, 3, 4, 6-13 and 15-17 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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